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Hold **O**n.
Persuade.
Empower.

A school-based, peer-to-peer
suicide prevention program

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"I can see the difference that Hope Squads have made in a lot of students' lives. A lot of kids have gotten help that I wouldn't have been able to find. I wouldn't have known. A lot of them are so good at masking that they're happy-go-lucky that you'd never guess they had a problem. But one of their friends knows, and when you call them down, it all comes out."

*Jerry Payne
School Counselor
Riverton High School*

Creating a common language about suicide.



QPR and Hope Squad® are excited to partner in suicide prevention.

The Program

1. Train

- » Train students and staff in schools to **recognize** suicide warning signs and **act** upon those warnings to break the code of silence.
- » Train students and staff to **identify** adolescents with undetected, untreated, or emerging mental disorders.

2. Build

- » Build positive relationships among **peers** and **faculty** in schools to facilitate acceptance for students seeking help.
- » Build strong relationships with **local mental health agencies** and **communities** while educating **students, parents,** and **school staff** about available community mental health resources.

3. Change

- » Change the **school culture** regarding suicide by reducing stigmas about mental health and suicide.
- » Change **community perceptions** of mental health by creating awareness about suicide and the tools available to prevent suicide.

In 2013, suicide was the second leading cause of death among high-school aged youth in the United States:¹ an estimated 1.1 million students in grades 9–12 attempted suicide.²

As staggering as these numbers are, one suicide is too many. That's why Hope Squad exists.

Hope Squad® seeks to reduce self-destructive behavior and youth suicide by training, building, and creating change in schools and communities.

The objectives to achieve that goal fall simply under three primary actions: train, build, and change. The program empowers students by training and helping them to build connections in the community so that they can change the culture of your school.

This program has evolved over several years developing effective methods that are presently used.

“Kids this age are marvelous at listening to their friends, but they get overwhelmed and don't know how to carry it after a while.

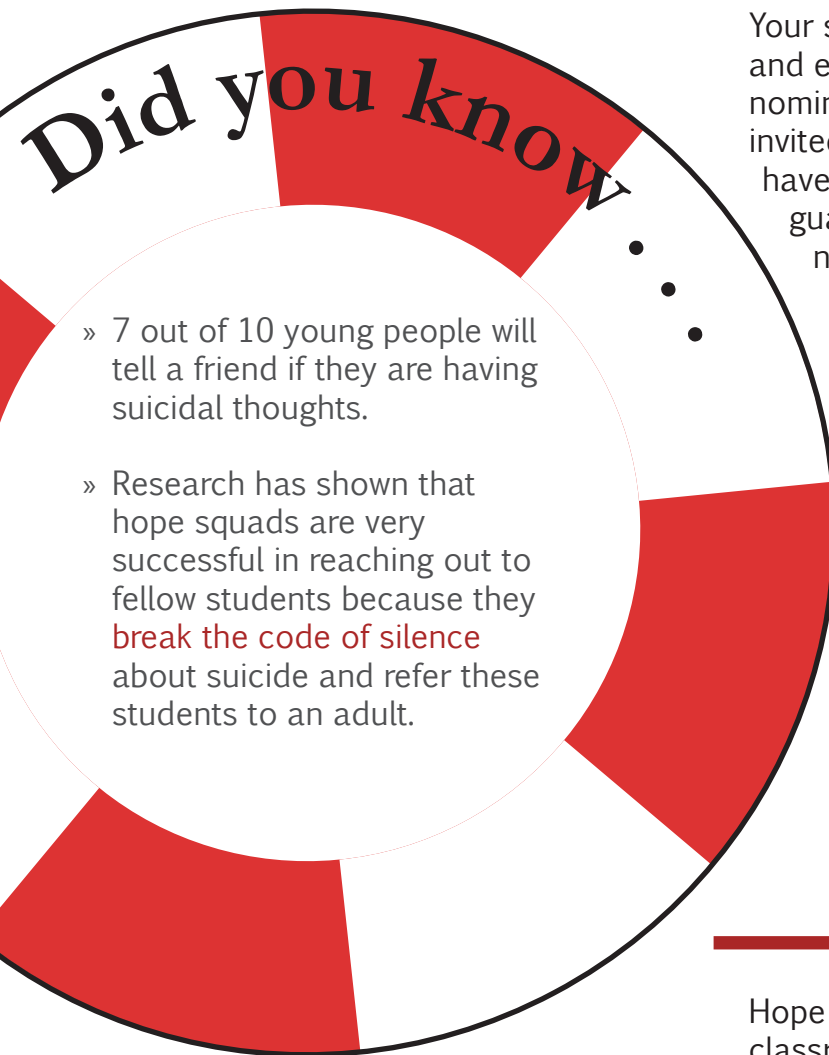
So if you have a program that addresses what to do and how to get help sooner, [you can] perhaps break cycles sooner. I think peers are very relevant.”

Hillside Middle School

¹ “10 Leading Causes of Death by Age Group, United States – 2013,” Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, http://www.cdc.gov/injury/wisqars/pdf/leading_causes_of_death_by_age_group_2013-a.pdf.

² According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 8% of students in grades 9–12 attempted suicide in 2013 (<http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/suicide-datasheet-a.pdf>); according to the National Center for Education Statistics, the number of students enrolled in those grades in 2015 was approximately 14.9 million (<http://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=372>).

Peer Leaders



Your school's Hope Squad members are the eyes and ears of your school. Members are students nominated by their peers to be on the squad. Once invited to be a Hope Squad member, students must have a permission form signed by their parents or guardians before going through training. These nominated students are then trained with evidence-based training modules to watch for at-risk students, offer friendship, identify warning signs, and seek help from adults.

Your Hope Squad will not only be working to build bridges between students and faculty, but will be working to change the culture of your school.

“Mainly throughout the year, we focus on boosting the morale of the school, encouraging everybody to live more fully.”

*Hope Squad Member
Springville High School*

Hope Squad empowers students—not just in the classroom, but in all aspects of life. Members of Hope Squads learn how to lead and how to create positive change in their environments by practicing their training and relationship-building knowledge. Hope Squad sets out to train, build, and change students so those students can train, build, and change wherever they go.



Hope Week

Your Hope Squad will host a hope week at school once a year in which they help the whole school focus on hope at a personal level and unity at a school level.

“The Hope Squad has changed the culture of our school to one where everyone looks out for one another and students let adults know when they see or hear something that concerns them.”

Springville Junior High School

During hope week, Hope Squad members openly talk about suicide, mental health, bullying, and other aspects of life that may seriously discourage students and lead them to consider taking their own lives. Hope week activities can include candy giveaways, quote walls, chalk drawing activities, and hope-themed poster making contests. Some Hope Squads have even arranged for guest speakers to come to their schools to address depression, resiliency, perseverance, and other similar topics.

Hope week has shown to be effective in helping unify schools—students and faculty—and in building a culture of acceptance and hope.



Images (clockwise from top): Hope week kickoff; “Chalk the Block” event; Hope squad stands with their matching t-shirts; “Light the Sky” event to raise suicide awareness; “Chalk the Block” event.



“During the Utah Youth Suicide Study, I found that teens who die by suicide communicate different problems with their peers than with their parents. . . . [T]he best suicide prevention models in other states are now adding a peer element, after struggling with other models. **I think the Hope Squad is a key element for suicide prevention, and could potentially be a key component for other problems, such as bullying.**”

Doug Gray, MD
Professor of Psychiatry
Suicidologist
University of Utah School of Medicine



“The parents need to know what an amazing program this is and how much it not only **benefits** those students who are in **emotional need** but also those students, like my son, who **love helping others and genuinely care about their welfare.**”

Parent of a Hope Squad member
Riverton High School



“The work that [Hope Squad] is doing right now to intervene with youth across the state in prevention and early identification is probably **one of the most critical aspects to our success in preventing suicide in the long run!**”

Dr. Scott Boyle
University of Utah



“Recently I attended the Suicide Prevention meeting in May where Greg Hudnall was the presenter. When I returned from the event I was almost angry that more people weren’t there. **Every teacher, church leader, parent, and grandparent should have been there.**”

Mary Brown
Associate Professor of Public Health
Utah Valley University

QPR Partnership



QPR and Hope Squad® are excited to partner to prevent suicide.

The QPR mission is to reduce suicidal behaviors and save lives by providing innovative, practical, and proven suicide prevention training. The signs of crisis are all around us. We believe that quality education empowers all people, regardless of their background, to make a positive difference in the life of someone they know.

Hope Squads, their adult leaders, and other school and community stakeholders will be certified and trained as QPR gatekeepers. The 90-minute QPR Gatekeeper Training for Suicide Prevention program teaches people how to recognize suicide-warning signs, ask about suicide, and persuade people to accept professional help. As a universal intervention for troubled youth and others, QPR has been taught to more than two million people worldwide

The Hope Squad program has 12 years of experience, supporting independent research from the University of Utah, and has received national recognition for its effectiveness and integrated community model. Hope Squad employs the same approach to community-based suicide prevention as does the QPR Institute, and has developed adult-led, school-based peer support teams.

To learn more about QPR please visit qprinstitute.com

